

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A postage evidencing meter comprising:
an authorization database for storing parameters for at least one selected user, wherein the parameters limit the ~~at least one~~ selected user's ability to evidence postage using the meter.

2. (Currently Amended) The postage evidencing meter of claim 1 wherein the parameters include a maximum postage amount that the ~~at least one~~ selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage.

3. (Currently Amended) The postage evidencing meter of claim 1 wherein the parameters include a period of time during which the selected user is allowed to use the meter to evidence postage.

4. (Currently Amended) The postage evidencing meter of claim 1 wherein the parameters include:
a maximum postage amount that the ~~at least one~~ selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage over a selected period of time.

5. (Original) The postage evidencing meter of claim 1 further comprising:
a user interface;
a printer; and
a security module.

6. (Original) The postage evidencing meter of claim 1 wherein the authorization database is stored on a removable storage device.

7. (Original) The postage evidencing meter of claim 1 wherein the authorization database is coupled to the meter via a communication link to a remote postage information system.

8. (Currently Amended) A system for controlling postage usage, comprising:
one or more postage evidencing meters having a communication module for
providing a communication link between the postage evidencing meter and a postage
information system,

wherein the ~~postage evidencing meter~~ postage information system includes a database
for storing postage usage parameters for at least one selected user, wherein the parameters
limit the ~~at least one~~ selected user's ability to evidence postage using the meter.

9. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 8 wherein the parameters include a
maximum postage amount that the ~~at least one~~ selected user is allowed to use on the meter to
evidence postage.

10. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 8 wherein the parameters include a
period of time during which the selected user is allowed to use the meter to evidence postage.

11. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 8 wherein the parameters include:
a maximum postage amount that the ~~at least one~~ selected user is allowed to use on the
meter to evidence postage during a selected period of time.

12. (Original) The system of claim 8 wherein the communication link is a
wireless link.

13. (Original) The system of claim 8 wherein the communications link is a
wireline link.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A system for controlling postage usage, comprising:
at least two postage evidencing meters, each meter having a processor and a
communication module for providing a communication link between the at least two meters,
wherein postage usage parameters for at least one selected user are exchanged
between meters via the communication link, and wherein the parameters control the ~~at least
one~~ selected user's ability to evidence postage using the meter.

16. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 15 wherein the parameters include a maximum postage amount that the ~~at least one~~ selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage.

17. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 15 wherein the parameters include a maximum amount of postage that can be evidenced by ~~[[a]]~~ the selected user during a selected period of time.

18. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 15 wherein the parameters include:
a maximum postage amount that the ~~at least one~~ selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage; and
a period of time during which the selected user is allowed to use the meter to evidence postage.

19. (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein the communication link is a wireless link.

20. (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein the communications link is a wireline link.

21. (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein said communication link is used to transfer postage values securely between the at least two meters using cryptographic techniques.

22. (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein the exchange of postage usage parameters is bi-directional.

23. (Original) A method for transferring postage value between postage evidencing devices, comprising:

receiving a request for a postage value transfer, the request identifying a destination device and an amount of postage value to be transferred;

creating a postage value token at a first postage evidencing device;

subtracting the postage value amount from registers in the first postage evidencing device;

transferring the postage value token to a second postage evidencing device;

verifying the postage value token at the second postage evidencing device; and

adding the postage value to registers at the second postage evidencing device.

24. (Original) The method for transferring postage value of claim 23 further comprising:

transferring the postage value using a communications link between the first and second postage evidencing devices.

25. (Original) The method for transferring postage value of claim 24 wherein the communication link is a wireless link.

26. (Original) The method for transferring postage value of claim 24 wherein the communication link is a wireline link.

27. (Original) The method for transferring postage value of claim 23 further comprising:

transferring the postage value using a removable storage device.

28. (Original) The method for transferring postage value of claim 23 wherein the postage value token is a cryptographically secure token.

29. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling postage usage comprising: receiving a request to evidence postage from a selected user;

determining, based on the selected user's user postage account, if sufficient postage is available within a current period of time to fulfill the request for the selected user;

evidencing a requested postage amount; and

recording postage usage for the selected user in the user postage account.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29 further comprising:
receiving a request to use the user postage account ~~of a selected user~~; and
authenticating the selected user.
31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[28]]~~ 29 further comprising:
receiving a request to configure parameters for the selected user; and
modifying postage usage limits ~~for the selected user~~ in the user postage account.
32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31 wherein the usage limits are
selected from the group consisting of:
a maximum amount of postage that can be evidenced for the selected user;
a time period during which the selected user is authorized to evidence postage; and
a class of postage that the selected user is authorized to evidence.
33. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[28]]~~ 29 further comprising:
receiving a request to purchase postage for the selected user; and
adding a purchased postage value to ~~an~~ the user postage account ~~for the selected user~~.